15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

613 614 621 formed independent descent groups by individual households, for which no traceable genealogical relation with any other descent groups could be established, though some of them belonged to the same *kur*. In Sohkynduh, the total 48 households were divided into 16 *kur* (according to the house-owner), and in Kongton, the total 62 households were divided into 9 *kur*, while the number of actual descent groups amount to 31 in Sohkynduh and 41 in Kongton.

166 178 613 614 621 This fact, I presumed, indicated a considerable mobility of the population of each village community. Hence, I tried my best to reconstruct the historical alignments of these descent groups, both from my genealogical data and with the help of the villagers' memory. The result showed that the mobility of the population over the last fifty years had been surprisingly great and complex. In Sohkynduh, the Praian clan seems to be the oldest inhabitants of this village with 16 *kur* segments. Next came a family of the Ksing. The third wave was a family of Khonglam, and the fourth, Siem Lyngngoh which I mentioned previously (p. 104). The next were families of the Kynshah, many members of which had left for Nonprian village after a few years. The sixth wave was the Srieh family. All the above movements took place before the great earthquake of 1897 which shook Assam. After 1897 the movements became more intense and complicated, and involved many families of various *kur*. The villagers could not remember the order in which they came: there has been continual coming and going even up to now. At present, the Prarian, the Ksing, the Khonglam, the Kynshah and the Dkhar are the older among the 16 *kur*. However, such migrations concern usually a single family only, not a group of *kur*, and that is the typical pattern of Khasi migration. Hence, families which have the same *kur* name do not always indicate the same movements. The incentive for such migration seems to be to get land better appropriated to one's economic condition. Particularly, as I have already mentioned elsewhere (p. 105), the shortage of land seems to encourage families of elder sisters who have no share of property, to move to other areas and look for land.

Thus, many households which make up the present village are minor segments of different *kur*, or of the same *kur*, but they can hardly trace their genealogical relations to one another. A migration to a new village was not undertaken at random; it was mostly as a result of information received from neighbouring villages, or from those where friends or relatives had already settled in. Several neighbouring villages usually dispose of more than one common market where they can exchange information and developed friendships over trading. The matrilineal kinship relation is no more important a factor than any of the others mentioned above. Among the Khasi,

178 613 614 621

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

some clerical work. However, such instances are very rare in these regions and few Christians are to be found among the people. So far as my genealogical table accounts for, only two boys from Sohkynduh, and one girl and one boy from Kongton, left for Shillong, and married there. In contrast to these exceptional cases in these villages, in the upland Khasi Hills, there are considerable changes in the composition of a village with high geographical and social mobility of population because of the spread of Christian education and urban influence.

The people of the two villages say that marriages with outside people were not formally practised, and were only a recent tendency. However, the composition of the population of the two villages showed extensive movements of population in the past (not to urban areas, but from village to village). Such movement is attributed mostly to migration by a family rather than by an individual on marriage. This type of migration is clearly found also in the process of the formation of Jatinga village (see Appendix, Jatinga).

The composition of the village community and the social characteristics of Sohkynduh and Kongton show very similar features of village endogamy. They seem to be typical of the traditional pattern of Khasi villages. Village endogamy is the intrinsic pattern among the Khasis. This fact can be also observed to a considerable degree in Shella and Jatinga.

[P. 116 is blank]

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

592 593 613 he clearly maintains the label of his descent group, he is at least divorced from them economically. If a father's activities were such as to permit the accumulation of wealth to be handed over to the next generation, he is always remembered with great respect and admiration by his successors and by the descendants of his wife's matrilineal line. In such a case he is looked upon as a member of his wife's descent group rather than of his mother's descent group. The best examples of this are the cases of men belonging to the first generation of Jatinga villagers, especially that of the founder of [166] Jatinga. These immigrants to Jatinga mostly accompanied their wives, who were not heiresses (as I mentioned previously, the unit of Khasi immigrants is mostly found in this kind of a couple); and most of them established successful matrimonial life with paternal authority, having been freed from the gravity of both matri-kin of wife as well as of husband.

Not necessarily confined to such cases of immigrants, even in an ordinary situation, if husband is ready to devote himself for his wife and children, the matrimonial life mostly turns happier and well established one. For under the Khasi matrilineal system, a wife, if she is not the heiress, is normally oriented to develop surprisingly high degree of independence from her descent group, i.e. her natal *iing*, unlike women of other matrilineal societies. This fact is closely related with the unique structure of the *iing*, as already discussed.

As a woman (non-heiress) tends to keep a certain distance to her natal *iing*, her brother accordingly decreases his concern to her new household. The pressure of the authority (wife's maternal uncle or brother) of wife's natal *iing*, on such a household becomes less marked. The wife's brothers are members of her natal *iing*, not of her new established *iing*, and therefore none of them can act as an authority over her new *iing*, though they may exercise certain pressure on the sister's husband, since the sister who established the new *iing* still keeps her membership in her natal *iing*. In fact a husband actually feels pressure from his wife's brothers; the occasional visits of the authority of her natal *iing* exercise a psychological check on his whole control over her and his children. Should any serious mischance occur in the marriage, the wife will run to her brother for consultation. Furthermore, as member of her natal *iing*, he has the right to demand the property acquired by him if his wife has no successor, since it automatically belongs to his wife unless he acquired it without cohabitation with her, or through the capital of his *iing*. However, the process of segmentation in the *iing* leads the wife to greater attachment to her husband, particularly when his economic contribution is important, and as a consequence weakens her ties with her natal *iing*.

613 The limited rights of the brother over his sister's (non-heiress)

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7
Garo AR5

field work as well as on the accounts of various matrilineal systems, I feel strongly that there must be different types of systems which may be distinguished as "household-lineage" and "segmentary-lineage". Fortes and Eggan postulate the pre-eminence of the descent principle over residence. Though this may be the case among the Ashanti and the Hopi, it does not fit the cases belonging to what I call "household-lineage" type. Firth's argument emphasizing the importance of rights to group membership being associated with locality, fits very well with the latter case. With more precision and subtilty than Kroeber, he argues that "residence by itself does not give title to descent-group membership, but land rights established by descent-group membership tend to remain operational only through residence" (Firth 1957, p. 7).

I believe there are crucial differences between these household-lineage type and segmentary-lineage type organizations. The technical *process of fission into segments is similar* in both types. But in the former, once a segmented group attains autonomy, the relation between the segments will easily be forgotten after a few generations, as it has no significant social implication. Among these societies, people's genealogical memory outside the residential group is surprisingly poor. This empirical fact also suggests a different structure from that of the segmentary system.

In both types of society the internal organization of a household is the same, but it differs externally. Eggan states that "Kroeber's and Parsons' statements about the lack of system in regard to Zuni kinship indicate judgement from some arbitrary standard" and adds "The concept of the lineage provides a bridge between the household and the clan" (Eggan, *ibid.*, p. 197). I cannot agree with this. In fact, my study of the Garo, the Khasi and the Nayar corresponds very well to the Zuni situation described by Kroeber and Parsons. There are matrilineal systems which lack a bridge between the household and the clan.

Then what is it that makes the difference between the two types of organization in similar unilineal systems? I am not sure that I can produce at present effective hypotheses on this issue. However, empirical facts show that the household-lineage type organization is likely to be found among more complicated societies or in a society with considerable mobility. This we gather also if we compare the village compositions of the Hopi and the Zuni. In the case of the Khasi, we saw that there was considerable mobility in population even in remote villages, so that we easily understand that in such a condition lineage membership hardly maintained itself. This seems to agree with the view put forth by Fortes on segmentary systems. Fortes says the limits of the spread or span of internal segmentation of the

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

Shella

Confederacy forms a more marked endogamous community, through being cut off geographically and economically from the rest of the Khasi, and socially from the neighbouring Hindu people.

The Economy and the People.

Shella lies along the upper part of the Shella River and stretches upwards along the steep slope, looking down towards the Bengal plain. The climate of this part of the hills is considered to be one of the worst in tropical India for human habitation. The Bengal plain, though warmer than this area, is considered more healthy. This border land is the zone of malaria, typhoid, black fever, cholera, etc. None of the Bengalee peasants dare to live in such an area. However, it is the most fertile for products such as betel-nuts, pan-leaves, oranges, bananas and pineapples, and it also produces limestone. These people seem to prefer to settle in this zone and to enjoy its prosperity, at the expense of human lives: every year, especially between March and September, the inhabitants suffer from various fevers and dysentry and other diseases, many of the weaker facing death.

Before the Partition of India and Pakistan, the products of Shella were carried down the Shella River to Sylhet, one of the biggest centres in East Bengal, which brought unimaginable wealth to the Shella people. Their houses were built by carpenters from Sylhet. The style and structure of these houses were exceptionally elaborate for the Khasi. They purchased vast rice fields in the plain, which used to be cultivated by Bengalee and Garo labourers engaged by them. These Khasi do not themselves know how to cultivate rice fields; they have always been managers or landowners. Their boys used to be sent to high schools and colleges in Sylhet. As a result of their trading with the Bengalee, many of them read and speak fluent Bengalee. There is no difference between their style of clothing and that of the Bengalee, though the women maintain their traditional dress in the Shella style.

They have thus been distinguished from the rest of the Khasi not only geographically, but also economically and culturally. Their personality also differs sharply from the rest of the Khasi. They are very sociable, and quick, a quality lacking among the Khasi of Sohkynduh and Kongton. They are clever enough to deal with strangers. The upland Khasi say Shella people are very cunning. This remark shows one side of these people. They had to be cunning, since they traded with the Sylhet Bengalee who were said to be the most cunning of their race. Their role in the trade and in the history of the modernization of the Hills was considerable. For centuries they represented intellectual Khasi owing to their contact with Hindu civilization, while the Hills remained in darkness. They assumed an important role when the British established an administration in the Hills, and even up to now, many leading Khasi originated from this area: for instance, Lati Hat, the first interpreter of the British Headquarters at Cherrapunjee; Jeebon Roy, who was the first Magistrate among the Khasi; Maham Sing, a lawyer and Member of the Legislative Assembly (the grandson of Jeebon Roy); Nichols Roy, Minister of Health and Prisons of the Assam Government, Member of the Legislative Assembly, and Missionary of the Church of God; R. R. Thomas (brother of Nichols Roy), Principal of the Gauhati University, etc.

Through constant cultural contact with Hindu, and encouraged by their economic prosperity, the Shella Khasi, like the Jaintias, have been much influenced by Hindu culture. However, this does not mean that the people of Shella adopted the Hindu beliefs. Though there is a small Hindu shrine, and some ceremonial elements were borrowed from the Hindu, most of the

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

621 [175] [101] [211] [346] [771]

[Jatinga]

This village was founded in 1903 by Khasi immigrants from the Jaintia Hills. At the entrance of the village, a bust of the founder, Lakhanbang Suchiang, stands facing towards the east; it was erected on the occasion of the celebration of their Golden jubilee, in November 1955. Houses are scattered along the ridge of the moutain to the east and to the west; in the centre is the church. All the inhabitants are Christians. Before the Partition this was one of the most modern and prosperous villages in Assam.

101 121 621

Jatinga provides a very interesting instance of the Khasi 'colonial' village. It is surrounded by villages of the Kuki, of the Zemi-Naga, and of the Cacharee, who constitute the main population of the North Cachar Hills, and who are tribes entirely different from the Khasi, in economy, social organization, language and culture. Therefore, Jatinga is like an island of Khasi community. I took this village as one of my fields, because I was particularly interested to discover how far the Khasi matrilineal organization is kept up in a community thus situated, surrounded by patrilineal tribes, and considerably modernized by Christianization and economic prosperity; and I was also interested in the process of formation of a new village, in comparison with Rimsibara and Joshipara in the Garo Hills.

Formation of the Present Population of Jatinga.

The first immigrants to Jatinga.

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The main population of Jatinga, including the founder, originated in Bataw village in the Jaintia Hills, twelve miles away from Jaintiapur, the capital of the then Jaintia Rajas. This village is situated on the border of the Jaintia Hills and the East Bengal plain, the location being very similar to that of Shella, as are their culture and economy. In the later part of the nineteenth century, some members of Bataw village moved to Borkhala, ten miles from Silchar, one of the biggest villages of the then Cacharee king.

These immigrants who came to Borkhala stayed there about fifteen years before they came to Jatinga. Kloribon, the first daughter of the founder's sister was born there. In November 1905, some Christian Khasi left Borkhala for Jatinga, acting on information gathered from a Welsh Mission at Haflong, that the land of present Jatinga was fertile and fit for their cultivation. They were the first immigrants to Jatinga. The Government record names the following three persons as the first immigrants to Jatinga: Suchiang Lakhanbang, Tariang, and Suchen Munik. In fact, according to the data which I collected at Jatinga, Suchiang Lakhanbang was accompanied by the following persons (the names in brackets indicate the clans):

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his wife, Misibon (Phanwar),[1]
his brother, Pryntah, and Pryntah's wife, Sintu (Rupsi),
his sister, Laptho, and Laptho's husband, Munik (Suchen) with their daughter, Kloribon, and Munik's younger brother, Sain.
his friend, Tariang.

Soon after their settlement, Sain, the brother of Munik, brought his wife Tahin (Suiam) from Jaintia. Misibon brought her younger sister, Dissibon. Tariang who came with Lakhanbang afterwards called his wife, Palong. But having spent some time there, they left eventually for another place, so that

1. Misibon was a native of the Cherrapunjee area of the Khasi Hills (not of Jaintia like the others). She was a school teacher at Cherrapunjee, and later became a teacher at a school near Jaintiapur, where she married Lakhanbang.

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

there are none of their descendants in Jatinga. Summing up, the first party who settled at Jatinga was composed of people of the following five clans:

1. Suchiang — Lakhanbang, his sister, Lapthe, and her daughter, Khorthon, his brother, Pryntah.
2. Suchen — Munik and his younger brother, Sain.
3. Phanwar — Misibon and her younger sister, Diasibon.
4. Rupsi — Sintu, the wife of Pryntah.
5. Sulam — Tahin, the wife of Sain.

Among them, Suchen had no female member. Phanwar had no successor. Misibon had no issue and Diasibon did not marry. Therefore, Suchiang, Rupsi and Sulam are the oldest clans in present Jatinga. Suchiang and Rupsi especially are the dominant and richest groups among the present population.

This was the time when the railway from Gauhati to Silchar was being constructed. Some Khasi labourers were working at Haflong on the construction of the railway. After the foundation of Jatinga, these Khasi workers established marriage relations with the Khasi of Jatinga, and finally, upon completion of the railway, many of them became the inhabitants of Jatinga. The present members of the Dome and Siangshai clans are the descendants of these people, and they form a considerable number of the present inhabitants of Jatinga. Besides them, there were a few other Khasi at Haflong who were engaged in trading business. In the course of time, they also had marital relations with Jatinga people and came to Jatinga.

After five years had elapsed they found that in spite of their hard work the land was not favourable to them. Many of them left Jatinga. This was the hardest period of Jatinga history.

The second migration (1919-1925).

The railway which once had been blocked was reopened in 1919. The people who had left Jatinga came back to settle there. This time the circumstances seemed to them quite favourable. The pan trees which they had planted earlier were growing and they could gather considerable produce. The village grew bigger around 1920 as a result of new immigrants from Jaintia, most of them were people from Bataw, the village of the founder. In this period, many immigrants came from Jaintia not only to Jatinga but also to Sylhet, Borkhala and other places outside the Khasi-Jaintia Hills. It seems that by this time the over-populated Jaintia realised that these areas were favourable for their new home. However, the successive waves of Jaintia immigrants to Jatinga ceased by 1925, its population having reached saturation point.

Orange production brought economic prosperity to the people of Jatinga. Wealthy villagers employed temporary labourers from the Jaintia Hills every year. Some of these labourers came with their families and others came individually. During their stay at Jatinga, some of them married and settled there. Hence, there are also descendants of such labourers among the present inhabitants of Jatinga.

Some Aspects of Descent Groups.

Throughout the history of Jatinga, immigrations have always been undertaken by a family (elementary family, siblings) or by an individual, but never by a group of clan members. Therefore, the present population is grouped in small descent groups according to each migration. Though some of them happened to have the same clan name, their history of migration and their

19: Assam G-5 (1959) 1965 A87 Khasi A87

CHAPTER—X

Summary of main findings

10.1. Twenty-eight villages were selected for the purpose of the survey. Out of the 28 villages selected, 10 from Border area and 8 from Project area were selected purposively while the remaining 10 were selected at random from the entire district which is referred hereafter as general area.

Migration from big villages was rare but some migration was reported in respect of small villages.

Occurrence of Malaria, influenza and dysentery is a regular phenomenon in the area. Medical facilities were not found satisfactory and as much as 70 per cent of the villages have no dispensary within a radius of five miles. In regard to education, the facilities cannot also be said to be unsatisfactory for more than 60 per cent of the villages have a Lower Primary School. Transport facilities were not satisfactory [illegible] of the villages still depend upon primitive mode of transport, namely head load. Correlated with [illegible] form of transport, is the prevalence of unduly high cost of transport.

10.2. The number of the families covered by the survey was 1006 in the Border area, and 665 in the Project area and 184 in the General area. The average size of a village in the respective area is 1004, 819 and 184 families. In the Border and Project areas females out number males being respectively 1046 and 1001 females per 1,000 males as against 948 females per 1,000 males in the general area. Literacy is as high as 34 per cent in the border area and 31 per cent in the Project area but as low as 17 per cent in the general area. In all the areas literacy among females is very low.

The working population (earners and earning dependents) is as high as 53 per cent in the Border area, 54 per cent in the Project area and 63 per cent in the general area. While there were no cases of unemployment in the Project and General area, 13 persons were reported unemployed from border area.

10.3. 51 per cent of the families in Border area are wholly agricultural, 35 per cent partly agricultural and 14 per cent independent of agriculture. The corresponding figures for the Project area are 61, 31 and 8 per cent respectively while for the General area they are 98 per cent, 29 per cent, 1 per cent respectively.

Predominantly agricultural families constitute 87, 96 and 90 per cent of the families in Border, Project and General areas respectively.

10.4. 31 per cent of the families in Border area, 28 per cent in Project area and 10 per cent in General area were absolutely without any land while 35 per cent, 39 per cent and 34 per cent of the families in the respective areas possessed small holding ranging from 0.01 to 2.50 acres representing 11.34 and 36 per cent of the total holding area in the respective areas. 36 per cent of the families in Border and Project areas and 41 in General area possessed medium sized holding (2.51 to less than 10 acres)

19: Assam G-5 (1958) 1963 AR7 Khasi AR7

Name of village	No. of persons according to 1951 Census	No. of persons according to Present survey	Variation	No. of families according to listing schedule	
General Area—					
19. Mawlaiteng	113	86	−27	20	Average size of village 5·4
20. Jyngiar	69	47	−22	7	
21. Asola	29	22	−7	5	.. ..
22. Domaya	75	56	−19	20	
23. Lamyrsiang	118	97	−21	23	Average family size 4·8
24. Ingwala	138	140	2	24	
25. Mawkynshira	143	139	−4	40	
26. Jowa	48	31	−17	7	
27. Rynbah	134	126	−8	29	
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	
Total ..	914	802	−20	184	.. ..

N. B.—1951 census population figures are not shown against Border Area and Project Area villages. This is because of the fact that in some cases in the Census report, the different blocks of a village have been enumerated as different villages, *e.g.*, the village **Sohkha** has been enumerated in 1951 census as three villages, *viz.*, **Sohkha Phlang, Sohkha mission,** etc., while in some other cases, only one population figure has been recorded against a number of villages of which possibly one is the main village, others being its satellites and as these villages were selected without any reference to the **Census** Handbook, there is every likelihood of our selected villages not coinciding with **Census** villages. So far as migration is concerned it is very rare in big villages, particularly when they have some settled occupation but it was found through investigation that in some of the border villages due to continued adversities in their agricultural and other occupation people had to move away in search of work. Migration of some traders was reported from **Bholaganj** and **Lyngkhat**. Some **Khasi** families were reported to have migrated to Pakistan where they had got agricultural land. Heaviest emigration of this type was however, reported from **Sohkha**, a village so-called from **Saipung-Durrang, M. P. C. D. Block,** but located near the Indo-Pak Border, where about one third of its total population was said to have migrated to **Pakistan.** Some families from **Mawdon** are said to have migrated to a nearby village due to unhealthy condition of the village. A study of population variation in General area villages given above, will show that there is a net decrease of 20 persons in the sample villages from total number of persons recorded in 1951 Census. This is accounted for by migration of people which is considerable in smaller villages particularly those depending on shifting cultivation. A few families from **Mawlaiteng** are said to have migrated to **Mawlum** a village only a few furlong away from **Mawlaiteng.** Migration was also reported from **Lamyrsiang, Domaya, Asola,** and **Jowa** from **Rynbah** and **Mawkynshira** a few families were said to have left the village a few days ahead of the date of investigation for their cultivation at some distant place.

20: Hunter G-4 (no date) 1997 AR? Khasi AR?

361 In the interior of the Hills the largest villages are mere clusters of
463 huts. The great majority of the inhabitants are employed in agriculture, but there are no data upon which a proportion of agriculturists to non-agriculturists could be based.

167 There is no immigration into the District. Both the Khásis and
198 the Syntengs have been successful in preserving to the present day their primitive isolation, free from the interference of Hindoism. They still maintain their aboriginal forms of belief and religious worship, and repudiate alike the authority of Brâhmans and the entire system of caste. To some extent, however, they have
[262] given way to Hindu prejudices in the matter of purity of food. The few Hindus to be found in the Hills are temporary residents, employed in civil and military employ, who always contemplate returning to their own homes. The traders are for the most part natives of the
[441] Hills; for the Márwári merchants, who penetrate into every other corner of Assam, have been able to obtain no footing in the face of Khási competition. There is likewise no emigration from the District. The hillmen are a well-to-do and contented race, and either produce themselves or obtain by trade sufficient to satisfy their scanty wants. A certain number of both Khásis and
• [166] Syntengs proceed southwards every year to work on the tea gardens of Cáchár and Sylhet, but such absences from home is only temporary.

243 AGRICULTURE: RICE.—Thirteen different varieties of rice are cultivated in the District, of which the following is a list, giving the Khási name as well as the description of the grain:—(1) *U-kyllo khyrsiew* (*u*, the masculine article, meaning "the," and *kyllo*, mere masculine, meaning "paddy"), brown rice with long grain; (2) *u-kyllo-khyrsiew-lurúh*, a whitish rice with long grain; (3) *u-kyllo-lurúh*, round-grained rice; (4) *u-kyllo-kmai*, bearded, husked; (5) *u-kyllo-kmi-ka-ong*, black husked rice (literally *u* = "the," *kyllo* "paddy," *kmi* = "earth," *ka* = "that," *ong* = "black"); (6) *u-kyllo-ka-dil*, white rice; (7) *u-kyllo-sein*, scented rice (literally *u* = "the," *kyllo* = "paddy," *sein* = "royal"); (8) *u-kyllo ka-krok*, large-grained rice; (9) *u-kyllo-ka-diang*, small-grained rice; (10) *u-kyllo sa-kia*, early rice; (11) *u-kyllo ra-kor*, late rice; (12) *u-kyllo dang-ia*, rice grown along with beans; (13) *u-kyllo-ka-dil*, small rice.

Rice is cultivated in marshy fields situated near running water as well as in high lands. The first seven of the above thirteen species of rice are sown in marshy lands during the months of April and May,